

Chinese Knowledge Employees' Career Competence and Career Success

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of career competence on Chinese knowledge employees' career success. Survey data were collected from a sample of 213 Chinese knowledge employees. Career success was measured by subjective, that is career satisfaction. The research's results showed: there were three dimensions of career competence, respectively know-how, know-why and know-whom; Career competence can predict career success. Knowledge of the antecedents to career success should provide certain advantages to organizations attempting to select and motivate knowledge employees. This paper makes a valuable contribution to career success literatures by being one of the first to examine the effect of career competence on knowledge employees' career success.

Keywords

Career Success; Knowledge Employees; Career Competence

Introduction

Career success has been an important and popular focus of investigation in the management literature since 1980s. Career success is defined as the accumulated positive work and psychological outcomes resulting from one's work experiences (Seibert&Kraimer, 2001). It improves individuals' quantity or quality of life, in fact, career success also is the real or perceived achievements that individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences.

There has been more information produced in the last 60 years than that in the previous 2000 years. Information is very important to everyone. In an environment with PCs on every desk, and clean, modern factories that more closely resemble offices, knowledge will equate power. We define the people who access and use significant portions of the information resources as knowledge employees/workers, which will have autonomy and mobility. Even with demographic contraction and technological empowerment of knowledge employees,

employers will not be able to guarantee employment in the environment of global competitive pressure. What flexibility does afford workers is access to constant training and portable benefits: instead of job security but career security (Doly, 1990). Organizational success will be based not just on what the growing number of knowledge employees know, but on how fast they can learn and share their knowledge, the latter is related to career success.

Career success is important concern not only to knowledge employees but also to organizations. At the knowledge employees' level, career success refers to acquisition of materialistic advancement, power, and satisfaction (Gattiker & Larwood, 1990, 1988; Judge et al., 1995; Poole et al., 1991). Thus, knowledge employees with high career success feel happier and more successful about their careers relative to their own internal standards. Knowledge of career success helps knowledge employees develop appropriate strategies for career development (Aryee et al., 1994; Ellis & Heneman, 1990). Therefore, knowledge employees' personal success can eventually contribute to organizational success and organizational performance (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999). At the employer level, knowledge of the relationship between predictors (such as career competence, human capital and perceived organizational support) and career success can help employer design effectively career systems and other HR policy.

Sociological research on the determinants of career careers is quite extensive. A recent review of the career success literature (Tharenou, 1997) identified several categories of influences on career success. The most commonly investigated influences were human capital attributes (training, work experience, education) and demographic factors (age, sex, marital status, number of children). Although these classes of influences have provided important insights into the determinants of career success, there

is room for further development. Specifically, little research has examined the relationship career competence and career success.

The most recent and encompassing studies on the relationship between various predictors and career success (e.g. Boudreau et al., 2001; Judge et al., 1999; Seibert and Kraimer, 2001) are mostly based on relatively selective US samples with a narrow range of occupations. Our study seeks to improve on these earlier studies. We analyze pooled cross-sectional data of China. The nature of these samples allows us to investigate career success for the larger range of occupations. Furthermore, we gain insight into the extent to which psychological factors relate to career success in non-US samples.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the correlates of career competence and career success. In addition, our interest lies predominately in the dimensions of career competence.

In spite of the importance and intuitive appeal of the concept of career competence to career success, there has been much less researcher paid attention to these, in contrast with the much more frequently studied (and measured) constructs of personality, abilities, and human capital

Related Literature and Hypothesis

Career Success

A person's career can be defined as an ongoing sequence of education and work activities that are meaningful to the individual and that add value to the organizations in which the individual participates. Career is different from work. Taking an example, some university students have a part-time job for money, but they have no any career, and they study to get a good career. Therefore, job or work just for money or living, while career is for more, including self-achieve, prestige and so on. On the other hand, individuals can change a work but the career is unchanged. Take an example, Marry has worked for several employers as human resources manager in recent years, HR manager is her career. Of course sometime career is very similar to work.

In the present study, the complex concept of career success has to be addressed as well. What is career success? Is it high salary, position, and/or promotions? Is it an individual's satisfaction with and positive evaluation of his/her career? Abele and Wiese (2008) analyzed three facets of career success, objective

career success, subjective career success and comparison standard.

Career success has also been defined as objective and subjective elements of achievement and progress of an individual through the vocational lifespan. Career success has two kinds of components: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic success is relatively objective and observable, and typically consists of highly visible outcomes such as pay, ascendancy (Jaskolka, Beyer, &Trice, 1985) promotions, and/or position (Ng et al., 2005). Conversely, intrinsic success is defined as an individual's subjective reactions to his or her own career, and is the most common operation as career satisfaction (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Judge et al., 1995). Organizations might be especially care about objective career success (e.g. an individual's achievements in terms of pay, position, promotions, and performance), individuals might be interested in subjective career success (e.g. positive career-related perception). By far, subjective career success has been the most widely used in previous literature. On the other hand, satisfaction with one's career is a standard for assessing the quality of one's career experiences.

Eby and Lockwood (2003) examined three criteria of career success, that is perceived career satisfaction, perceived internal marketability, and perceived external marketability.

Success is an evaluative conception and valuation requires judges and a criterion against which outcome can be assessed. Research concerning success must therefore consider to whom and by what criteria a given indicator connotes success. The most meaningful distinction about who is judging success is probably whether individuals are judging their own success or others are judging for them. If success is to be judged reliably by others, the used criteria must be relatively objective and visible to others. When individual career success can be defined as the real or perceived achievements individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences (Judge et al., 1995). Consistent with previous research, we chose to partition career success into extrinsic and intrinsic components. Extrinsic success is relatively objective and observable, and typically consists of highly visible outcomes such as pay and ascendancy (Jaskolka, Beyer, &Trice, 1985). Although individuals probably also assess their own success by these objective criteria, more subjective measures are needed to tap

possible individual differences in feelings about these objective accomplishments; examples of measures that have been used include job satisfaction and employment goals.

Researchers from a wide variety of disciplines continue to investigate many psychological characteristics that could contribute to career success. For example, Thomas & Daniel (2010) examined the mediating processes through which human capital (e.g. education and work experience) contribute to objective indicators of career success (e.g. salaries and promotions). Career choice (Gattiker & Larwood, 1990), success criteria (Poole et al., 1991) are also some examples of more recent determinants of career success that have been examined. In one extensive cross-organization study, Judge et al. (1995) surveyed 1400 executives in a diverse sample of U.S. organizations, examining the extrinsic career success and intrinsic career success. They found that demographic, human capital, and motivational variables had significant effects on career success, but they did not examine the role of psychological factors, such as personality or competence.

Career competence is individual intrinsic factor, although career success can be affected by external factor, such as organizational support. Career competence is considered a stable disposition to take personal initiative in a broad range of activities and situations. It is important to develop a better understanding of the means by which individuals with high career competency achieve higher levels career success.

Career Competence

With rapid developments in computing, information technology, and global economy, has combined to change business competition as well as the type of work which is done in most developed countries (Doyle, 1990). More production jobs are moving to low wages countries while developed countries are doing more knowledge and service work.

A competency-based approach requires a change in virtually every management system in an organization. It needs create many new theoretical and research issues for the fields of organizational behavior and human resource management. (Lawler, 1994).

From the recent stream of about firm competency-based we can draw the career competence of concept. DeFillippi, R. J., & Arthur, M.

B. (1994) proposed a competence-based view of careers, derived from competence-based models of employer firms.

London and Bray (1984) proposed career identity, career insight, and career resilience, which is career motivation. Career identity includes how central the career is to the individual's personal identity or the extent to which the person pursues opportunities for advancement and recognition, and sacrifices non-work activities. The extent of career insight depends on one's expectations on realistic career and awareness of strengths, weakness and specific career goals. Career resilience, the maintenance component of career motivation, includes the individual's ability to adapt to constant circumstances and cope with negative work situations.

Know-why as one of factors of career competence, it means career insight and it describes the extent to which one has realistic career expectations, knowledge one's specific career goals, strengths and weaknesses (Noe, Noe, & Bachhuber, 1990). Know-why relates to career motivation. According to Eby and Lockwood (2003), know-why refers to proactive personality, openness to experience, and career insight.

One of categories of career competencies is know-how. This refers to career-relevant skills knowledge which accumulate over time and contribute to both the organization's and the individual's knowledge base (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996). Career self-efficacy is the degree to which one believes that he is capable of managing one's career. (Kossek, Roberts & Demarr, 1998). Individuals with high self-efficacy can set higher career goals, put in more effort, and pursue career strategies that lead to the achievement of those goals. Know-how relates to career self-efficacy, Know-how also refers to career/job-related skills and career identity (Eby & Lockwood, 2003).

Two things get it known (e.g., education, training). The first is the emphasis on developing a broad and flexible skill base which is transportable across organizational boundaries. In addition there is an emphasis on occupational learning rather than job-related learning (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Gunz, Evans & Jalland, 2000).

According to Eby and Lockwood (2003), the third career competency is knowing-whom. This refers to career-related networks and contact (DeFillippi &

Arthur, 1994), including relationships with others and personal communication (Parker & Arthur, 2000). In a word, it refers to experience with a mentor, internal networks, and external networks. Know-whom can provide access to new contacts and possible job opportunities (Arthur, 1994). The major attribution of know-whom is that it represents a resource for expertise, reputation development, and teaching (Parker & Arthur, 2000). The result of investing in this career competency is the development of career communities, networks which lead to career support and development (Parker & Arthur, 2000).

Thus, we believe that it is reasonable to expect that:

H1: There were three dimensions of career competencies, they are know-why, know-how and know-whom.

Eby and Lockwood (2003) examined three dimensions of career competence, know-why, know-whom, and know-how, in addition, three classes of career competencies are important predictors of career success.

The ability to seek out and implement professional opportunities as they arise is very critical in building any career. Seeking out these opportunities involving risks and givings has been originally offered.

Career training motivation is instrumentality-related perceptions which refer to the belief that the acquisition of career self-management skills will lead to specific outcomes. Career commitment and career motivation are more recent determinants of career success that have been investigated (Kidd and Green, 2006; Day and Allen, 2004). Career commitment is the strength of one's motivation to work in a chosen career role. Empirical evidence firmed the relationship between career commitment and career success. For example, Jones and Whitmore (1995) found career commitment predicted promotions. Day and Allen (2004) in their survey study of career committment, also found this variable to be positively related to salary level and performance effectiveness. Poon (2004) supported the relationship between career commitment and objective/subjective career success.

Openness to developmental feedback seeking enables individuals to better understand their environments, knowledge about their performance, and be able to use these data to their career advantage (Kilduff & Day, 1994; London & Mone, 1987; Turban

&Dougherty, 1994). Self-initiation of feedback has been consistently shown to enable individuals to develop corrective performance strategies (Ashford&Tsui, 1991). Previous research found there was a direct link from career planning to all three measures of success. Most interestingly, the path from career planning to objective success was the strongest one (Abele&Wiese, 2008).

Adaptability is defined as the ability to adapt to changing career environment, even which is difficult. It is an indicator of openness to change and hardiness in being able to handle the stresses of the new career context. Adaptability is widely noted in the current literature as being essential for personal career development capability (Hall& Mirvis, 1995). People with low adaptability would be less likely to learn and apply new knowledge to improve career opportunities and development.

Proactive personality is a stable disposition toward proactive behavior. According to Bateman and Grant (1993) people who are highly proactive identify opportunities and act on them, show initiative, and persevere until they bring about meaningful change or outcome. It is reasonable for individuals who are highly proactive will improve career opportunities and development. Seibert and Kraimer (1999) suggested proactive personality was positively associated with both self-reported objective (salary and promotions) and subjective (career satisfaction) indicators of career success. Given the positive effect of adaptability, career motivation career self-efficacy and other ability on career outcome, it seems logical to suggest that career competency is related to career satisfaction as well.

In accord with this previous work, we replicate and test the relationship between career competence and career satisfaction in Chinese knowledge employees. In doing so, we argue that the careers literature can gain from testing western theorizing of career competence/career success relationship outside the USA, in order to better understand the career competence involved in the career success process.

One of the main reasons for the interest in career competence is the belief that it is a much more stable ability than organizational support, human capital, and other predictor of career success, hence it s a more useful measure of an individual's response to his career. Another reason is career competence should be a more effective and reliable predictor of career success.

It is reasonable that career competence in the form of career-efficacy, adaptability, net-working and career motivation would lead to greater career opportunities and enhance career satisfaction. Hence, we propose that career competence leads to greater career opportunities and enhances career satisfaction.

Based upon the above, we develop hypothesis:

H2: There will be a positive relationship between career competence and career satisfaction. Knowledge employees who possess high levels of career competence will report greater career satisfaction than those who report low levels of career competence.

Participants

The data for this study were obtained from 213 knowledge employees from many IT companies, such as Alibaba, Eastern Communications. Job titles included managers (52%), technology personnel (18%), R&D personnel (30%). Of the total sample, 60% were male and 40% were female. Relative frequencies by age group were: 25 to 30, 62%; 31 to 35, 31%; 36 to 40, 5.2%; older 40, 1.9%.

A recent comparative study of nine countries found no differences in career success based on occupation or country and most demographic variables (Punnett, et al., 2007). Another comparative study of Australian and Malaysian managers also found no significant differences between the two groups with regard to career identity and career planning commitment (Noordin et al., 2002). Therefore, we expect career competence to influence career success as predicted by western models of career success though little research addressing the specific issues of this study in a cross-cultural context.

Variable Measurement

Career success captures an individual's long term satisfaction with his/her career (Judge et al., 1995). Career success is defined as the satisfaction individuals derived from intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of their careers, including pay, advancement, and developmental opportunities (Judge et al., 1995).

Career success is an evaluative concept. Evaluation requires judges and a criterion by which an outcome can be assessed. Therefore, research related to career success must consider to by what criteria. Judging from their own career success,

individuals can use internalized aspirations and feelings that are not visible to others as criteria; the results of such judgments are relatively subjective internal states or feelings. In the study, career success is evaluated by subjective feelings, career satisfaction.

Career satisfaction was measured with the eight-item scale developed by Judge, T. A., Higgins, C. A., Thoresen, C. J., & Barrick, M. R. (1999), which measures subjective career success. The eight items are: (a) I am satisfied with income; (b) I am satisfied with degree to which work involves interests; (c) I am satisfied with coworkers; (d) I am satisfied with use of skills and abilities; (e) I am satisfied with supervision; (f) I am satisfied with ability to develop ideas on job; (g) I am satisfied with respect that others give to job; (h) I am satisfied with satisfaction with job security. Judge, T. A. et al. (1990) reported an accept TABLE level of internal consistency for this scale ($\alpha = 0.92$). In the present study, the coefficient alpha reliability estimate was 0.90.

Proactive personality was measured using Bateman and Crant's (1993) 5-item scale. Openness to experience was assessed using Saucier's (1994) Mini-Markers Set. The measure consists of ten adjectives associated with openness to experience (e.g., creative, imaginative) and the respondent indicates the extent to which each adjective accurately describes him or herself using a five-point Likert-type scale. Day and Allen (2004) seven-item measure was used to assess career insight. Sample item is: I have a specific plan for achieving my career goal.

Career/job-related skills were measured with five items developed by Eby and Lockwood (2003). (i.e., 'I seek out opportunities for continuous learning in my career,' 'I have a diversified set of job related skills,' 'I remain current on the trends and development in my profession,' 'I seek out training and development opportunities,' 'I constantly update my job-related skills'). Four items from Noe et al.'s (1990) measure were used to assess career identity (sample item: 'I have joined professional organizations related to my career goals'). Both were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (1¼strongly disagree to 5¼strongly agree). Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-efficacy. Coefficient α was 0.81. Whether or not the respondent had experience as a knowledge employee was assessed by internal networks and external networks. Breadth of

networks within the organization (internal networks) was assessed using a three-item Likert-type measure developed for the present study (i.e., 'Co-workers say that I know a lot of people within the organization). Breadth of networks out-side the organization was measured with a four-item Likert-type measure (i.e., 'I have extensive contacts within the industry in which I work.').

Several control variables are used in the present study. Since age, job tenure (measured in years) and education may be related to career satisfaction, these variables are controlled in all subsequent analyses. Thus, these variables are also treated as control variables.

Result

We factor analyzed the 3 predictors of know-why items. Using a varimax rotation, and the factor analysis results are displayed in TABLE 1. As is shown in the TABLE, the factor analysis identified three factors with Eigen values greater than 1.0. Cumulatively, the three factors explained 68.1% of the variance in the measures. Examination of the scree plot showed a distinct break between the slope of the three factors and those of the subsequent factors whose Eigen values were less than 1.0. As it can be seen in the TABLE, the items about proactive loaded strongly on Factor 1 (the average factor loading was 0.67). Thus, this factor can be labeled proactive. The ten items loaded strongly on Factor 2 (the average factor loading was .71). Thus, this factor can be labeled opening. The seven items about career insight on Factor 3 (the average factor loading was 0.69). Thus, this factor can be labeled career insight.

The know-why had an alpha reliability of 0.92. We factor analyzed the 2 predictors of know-how items. Using a varimax rotation, the factor analysis results are displayed in TABLE 2. As it is shown in the TABLE, the factor analysis identified three factors with Eigen values greater than 1.0. Cumulatively, the two factors explained 69.4% of the variance in the measures. Examination of the scree plot showed a distinct break between the slope of the three factors and those of the subsequent factors whose Eigen values were less than 1.0. As can be seen in the TABLE, the five items about career/job related skill loaded strongly on Factor 1 (the average factor loading was 0.67).

TABLE 1 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF KNOW-WHY MEASURES (N=213)

Items	Factor1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Stronge push	0.69		
Face disagree	0.64		
Like my view is outstanding	0.53		
Like challenge	<u>0.73</u>		
Earlier to find chance	<u>0.77</u>		
I like Challenge		<u>0.81</u>	
I am curious		<u>0.78</u>	
Don't like daydream		0.66	
Seldom note the change		0.69	
Always use the same method		0.65	
Easy to find new opportunity		0.68	
Like new thing		<u>0.82</u>	
Avoid disagree		<u>0.78</u>	
looking for better ways to do things		0.57	
I am aware of my weaknesses (the things I am not good at).		0.67	
have a specific plan for achieving career goal.			0.66
have changed or revised career goals based on new information			0.67
have sought job assignments that			<u>0.80</u>
will help me obtain my career goal.			<u>0.78</u>
have clear career goals.			0.58
have realistic career goals.			0.66
know my strengths (what I can do well).			0.647

Note. Factor loadings greater than 0.70 are underlined, N (listwise) = 213.

Thus, this factor can be labeled career/job related skill. The four items loaded strongly on Factor 2 (the average factor loading was 0.71). Thus, this factor can be labeled career identity.

We factor analyzed the 2 predictors of know-whom items. Using a varimax rotation, the factor analysis results are displayed in TABLE 3. As it is shown in the TABLE, the factor analysis identified three factors with Eigen values greater than 1.0. Cumulatively, the two factors explained 68.8% of the variance in the measures. Examination of the scree plot showed a distinct break between the slope of the two factors

and those of the subsequent factors whose Eigenvalues were less than 1.0. As is can be seen in the TABLE, the items about internal networks loaded strongly on Factor 1 (the average factor loading was 0.67). Thus, this factor can be labeled internal networks.

TABLE 2 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF KNOW-HOW MEASURES (N=213)

Items	Factor1	Factor 2
I seek out opportunities for continuous learning in my career	0.685	
I have diversitive job related skills	<u>0.711</u>	
I remain current on the trends and development in my career	0.667	
I seek out training and development opportunities	0.631	
I constantly update my job-related skills	<u>0.770</u>	
I have joined professional organizations related to my career goals		<u>0.803</u>
I spent much free time on the activity that will help my career		<u>0.701</u>
I took course degree related my career		<u>0.729</u>
I kept current on company affairs		0.686

TABLE 3 FACTOR ANALYSIS OF KNOW-WHOM MEASURES (N=213)

Items	Factor1	Factor 2
Co-workers say that I know a lot of people within the organization	0.695	
I am well connected within the organization	<u>0.731</u>	
I have a lot of contacts with in the organization	0.527	
I have extensive contacts within the industry in which I work		0.641
Co-workers say that I know a lot of people outside the organization		<u>0.774</u>
I regularly network with individuals outside of my organization		<u>0.810</u>

The know-how had an alpha reliability of 0.89. Spearsons correlations among the study variables are presented in the TABLE 5. As it could be expected, TABLE 5 shows that predictors of career competence are significantly correlated to career success.

Discussion

This study investigated the relationship of career competence with perceived career success for 213 knowledge employees in Hangzhou, the People's Republic of China. As is it suggested by hypothesis one, career competence have three dimensions, know-how, know-why and know-whom. Our findings illustrated that 'know-why,' 'know-whom,' and 'know-how' are all important in predicting perceived career success. As it suggested by hypothesis three, knowledge employees whose career competence is higher reported higher levels of career satisfaction. The results of the study also revealed that career competence contributed separately and uniquely to career satisfaction.

Our results are consistent with previous research which has firmed that personality variables affect individuals' ability to adjust to inter-firm transitions (Kilduff & Day, 1994) and that individuals high on proactive personality tend to report greater career satisfaction (Seibert et al., 1999). Seibert (2001) also tested a model linking proactive personality and career success.

The idea that building and diversifying one's skill set and engaging in continuous learning is essential in today's economy has been extensively discussed in the literature (e.g., Arthur et al., 1999; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996a; Bird, 1994). We found the importance of these activities by linking skill building to perceived career success. Perhaps those with extensive skill feel well rounded and have a strong professional identity and seek out new learning experiences, so they possess more career satisfaction. This would be consistent with Hall and colleagues writing on the importance of developing an integrated self-identity that is not tied to any one organization and instead is linked to one's profession (Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

Know-who is also important predictor of career success. Previous research has demonstrated that networking is associated with re-employment (Lin & Dumin, 1986) and traditional indicators of career success such as promotion rates, bonuses, and job mobility (e.g., Burt, 1997). Our research extends this research by linking networking to career satisfaction. Networking is also very important in today's environment and suggests that individuals should spend more time in networking both inside and outside their organization than before.

TABLE 4 MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF STUDY VARIABLES (N=213)

Variable	M	SD
1.Age	2.33	0.68
2.Education	3.71	0.41
3.Tenure	4.66	2.33
4.Proactive	2.68	0.70
5.Openning	3.56	0.79
6.Career insight	3.40	0.70
7.Know-why	3.53	0.69
8.Internal network	3.46	0.75
9.External network	2.94	0.81
10.Career satisfaction	3.43	0.44

Notes: Education, Below Bachelor's degree=1, Bachelor's degree=2, Above Bachelor's degree=3 ; Age, Below 25=1, 25-30=2, 31-35=3, 36-45=4, Above 46=5

TABLE 5 COEFFICIENTS & CORRELATIONS OF STUDY VARIABLES (N=213)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Age							
2.Education	0.13						
3.Tenure	0.14	0.58**					
4.Know-why	0.12	0.34**	0.35**				
5. Know-how	0.10	0.14	0.27*	0.20*			
6. Know-whom	0.07	0.08	0.36*	0.25**	0.56**		
7.Career satisfaction	0.07	0.15*	0.31**	0.62**	0.67**	0.69**	

In economy, market, technology, structure and society in general areas, Chinese organizations are facing big pressures to adjust to the new, evolving demands of their constituencies and to become more efficient and competitive within their environments. These new demands will more likely necessitate changes in managing and supporting their employees' careers, which is their conceptions of the desirable regarding careers.

Career success is the positive psychological outcomes

or achievements one has accumulated as a result of experiences over the span of working life. Therefore, employers should help their employees' career to succeed. Of course, nowadays the models of careers are experiencing differently as compared to previous decades, knowledge employees and organizations should share responsibility in managing and controlling the process and the challenging nature of career success. There is widespread agreement among researchers and practitioners that career success is no longer solely determined by a set of well-defined variables, with changing careers. However, in contemporary work environment, most of employees are also likely to need organizational support in managing their careers. Consequently, knowledge employees whose career competence higher is likely to enhance their opportunities for career advancement, which, in turn, have higher level organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, and so on. In a word, knowledge employees' career success can eventually contribute to organizational performance, so, employers should take care of their career success to exchange their organizational commitments. Organizations should care antecedents of career success. Career success can be affected by the accumulated interaction between a variety of individual, organizational and societal norms, behaviors, and work practices. So, studies of career success must consider motivation, human capital, personality, and competence.

With challenges of today's continually changing work environment, knowledge employees should well plan their careers because recently a rapid shift in the locus of responsibility for career success has been seen. For example, Murphy and Ensher(2001) found that individuals who used self-set career goals reported greater job satisfaction and perceived career success; those who engaged in positive cognitions also had higher job satisfaction; and those who used behavioral self-management strategies reported greater perceived career success. At the same time, knowledge employees should focus on their own career competence.

In this paper, we have investigated career competence from a multidisciplinary point of view whether, and if so, to what extent career competence is directly related to knowledge employees' career success. Our analyses showed direct associations between career competence and career satisfaction. Thus, knowledge employees should develop high

career competence.

One of central theses of this study is that knowledge employees' career competence, which is their conceptions of the desirable regarding career are rooted in, and largely shaped by the work structures and social institutions in which individuals participate and are embedded. Career competence affects the kinds of interests on the motivation of knowledge employees and the types of incentives and benefits that are available through their career activity.

Overall, our findings are to some extent in accordance with the results of previous studies.

Implications of the Results

Knowledge employees not only should take responsibility for their own careers, but that they stand to benefit from so doing, even if their plans sometimes fail to be realized and their tactics do not always work. Changing career competence is important for knowledge employees.

The most important contribution of this research is that knowledge of the antecedents to career success should provide certain advantages to organizations attempting to select and motivate employees. The study of career competence, including career motivation, proactive and career self-efficacy is particularly useful since those whose career is satisfied are more likely to remain in the organization, strive towards the organization's mission, goals and objectives and devoted to their organization.

Organizations that seek to attract and retain the best possible employees can benefit from an understanding of what leads to their career success. An understanding of the process by which career success is created could therefore allow organizations to attract applicants who own higher levels of career competence, in turn, to be satisfied and committed to their job and career.

An unanswered question in this research remains, that is why and how career competence plays a key role in helping knowledge employees to obtain career success.

Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

As with any study, the study should have certain limitations. This study has several particular limitations that should be noted.

Firstly, this study was limited by the set of factors that were proposed to be linked to career success. Although there were many predictors that have been examined in previous models of career success, the study just investigated the impact of career competence.

Recent models of career success have included a number of individuals' variables. For example, Samuel, A. et al (1994) suggested that the antecedent sets of human capital, work values, family and structural or work variables accounted for over 40% of the explained variance in career success. Poole et al. (1993) affirmed linkages between variables that define one's life context which are posited to impinge on one's subjective career success. They argue that individuals' internal variables can affect career success. While the study did not investigate other variables influencing career success. One area of future research should concern is the influence of various other internal variables on career success.

Secondly, the sample was smaller than preferred and may have restricted the power needed to obtain significant results. Future research with larger samples is needed to support the findings and reevaluate ambiguous results from this study. Although we have included a wide range of variables, there are predictors of career success that have been examined in previous research but were not included because of the lack of available studies, such as ambition (e.g., Judge et al., 1995).

Thirdly, because of the lack of sufficient information, we were not able to search for moderators for some relationships.

Future research can provide additional information and extensions to these findings. For example, more information is needed to investigate how career competence influence career success.

Career success can be evaluated subjectively or objectively. The study did not identify what are the different types of career success. Future research should examine objective or both.

Broadly speaking, three conceptual approaches to career success can be identified that highlight predictors of career success. These can be referred to as individual, structural and behavioral. We focused mainly on the career competence as the main predictors of career success. However, as indicated in other studies (e.g. Ballout, 2007, Nabi, 2003), career

success is sometimes influenced by environment factors, employer's career development policy, family's support and so on, future studies should capture their influence.

Only few studies have examined the effect of psychological characteristics like work ethic on managerial success (Jaskolka et al.1985), especially, so little research has investigated the relationship between career competence and career success, future research should attempt to replicate these results with larger, more diverse samples and develop process models that may explain why career competence have associations with career success.

Further, increasing global careers emphasize the importance of international differences, which may embody different labor markets, employment policies, and management styles. Future research on career success should examine in the cross-cultural background.

Admittedly, the presented implications are speculative. However, they are realistic. From a managerial standpoint, future research needs to move beyond the current status quo and explores these important issues.

Conclusion

This study has examined the relationship between career competence and career success. This study also contributes to career research. Ng et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis summarized that currently there are four categories of predictors of career success: human capital, organizational sponsorship, socio-demographic status, and stable individual difference. Against the background of meager research on the career competence antecedents of career satisfaction, this study makes a proactive attempt in exploring one important factor, career competence and extends the line of research to career success.

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